MARVEL

PG 50 148

PETER PARKER™ SPIDER-MAN®

JENKINS

BUCKINGHAM

FAUCHER

PHOTO ALBUM

BUCKY delgado

Previously in Spider-Man...

After many years of keeping his identity a secret in order to protect his loved ones, Peter Parker's greatest fear is realized when none other than his beloved Aunt May discovers his true identity.

Later, Peter and May compare notes on the experiences they have been unable to share over the years. May confesses that she too feels responsible for the death of Peter's Uncle Ben-- killed so many years ago by a burglar. They resolve to discuss the matter at greater length in future.

And yet Peter cannot reveal the entire truth to his Aunt for fear of putting her in harm's way: once again, he is assailed by his nemesis, The Green Goblin.

The Goblin almost drives Peter into the rash act of killing to satisfy his hatred-- almost... but not quite. As Spider-Man, Peter refuses to succumb to hatred, deciding instead to use his nonaggression as a tribute to the memory of his murdered first love, Gwen Stacy.

Sadly, Spider-Man has lost a battle in finally winning the war: As a result of the Goblin's latest assault, Peter's friend, Flash Thompson is left in a coma and with little hope of recovery from a devastating brain injury.

Though is it the Goblin who is to blame for the injury, Peter cannot help but feel responsible.

BE WELL SOON!

GET WELL SOON

Sunday... 8.34 PM.

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Like, the more I hit these guys, the more *unconscious* they become.

Okay, let's see... you're one of Hammerhead's boys...

...Jamaican... Jamaican... Italian... you're new...

....oh, hey, Wally. How's it hangin'?

Get bent, you freak.

Tsk, Tsk, Walter. Such a lot of bitterness for one so young.

Okay, class, welcome to "Getting Your Butts Kicked 101." I want you all to think of me not only as a teacher but also as a *friend.*

Now, it looks as though we have a ruckus in the playground. Anyone care to tell me how this all got started? *Anyone?*

Well, frankly, I'm disappointed. Maybe I need to rephrase the question...

My guess is, Hammerhead decided to muscle in on the Rasta boys down at the wharf and he's met with some dissenting opinions. Am I *right,* Wally?

YAAAHHH!

I'll kiiiiiii yoooouu...

And I take it this is the final opinion of you all?

Okay, you've all got ten to fifteen years' *detention...*

HAPPY THANKSGIVING -ENJOY THE TURKEYS. LOVE, Spidey

9:04 PM.

Having done all I can possibly do to bring about ethnic harmony in this fine city of ours, I head home.

More than a little proud of myself, I might add. This has been a productive night full of heroic deeds and snappy one-liners. I feel as though I've accomplished something.

FFFRRRTTT

As I close in on my pad... and more specifically, the sweet oblivion of a few hours' sleep... my senses register an alarm.

It's only a point three-five on the Spidey scale, but it's enough to make me aware. Something's not right.

There's someone in my apartment.

Even though I'm in a hurry I gotta be careful. Not that I have anything to steal beyond a stereo once owned by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and a piece of cheese in the fridge named Kevin but *still*...

I can sense tension... trepidation. The air's full of some kind of weird energy, although I'm pretty sure there's no actual danger here.

I mean, if there were danger my spider-sense would be *telling* me, wouldn't it?

Stan Lee Presents...

AND HERE, MY TROUBLES BEGIN...

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I take it you've been gallivanting about the city like a squirrel on drugs again.

I don't suppose you ate a square meal before you went out?

COFFEE

I didn't *think* so. Here... I brought you a chicken sandwich and some coleslaw.

Aunt May...

It's forty degrees. I'm surprised you didn't catch your death of cold out there.

Aunt May, c'mon...

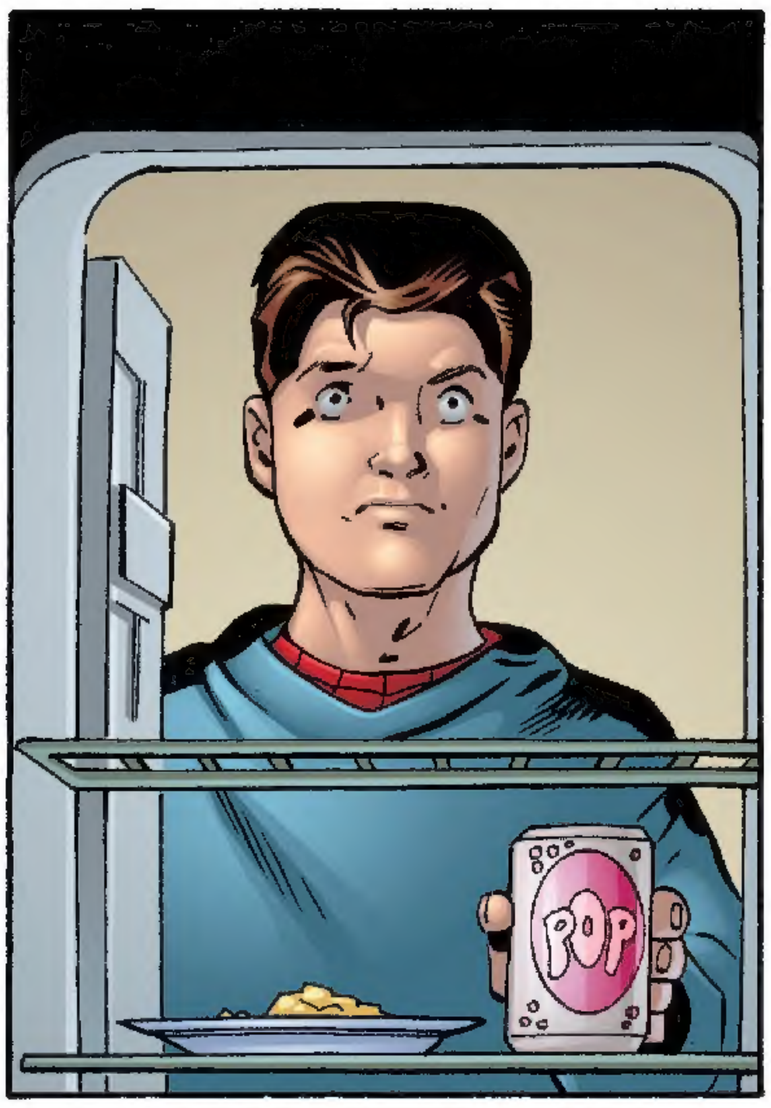
Don't you "Aunt May" me, young man.

I'm sorry, Peter. It's just... I've had a lot to think about these last few weeks. About you being Spider-Man, that is.

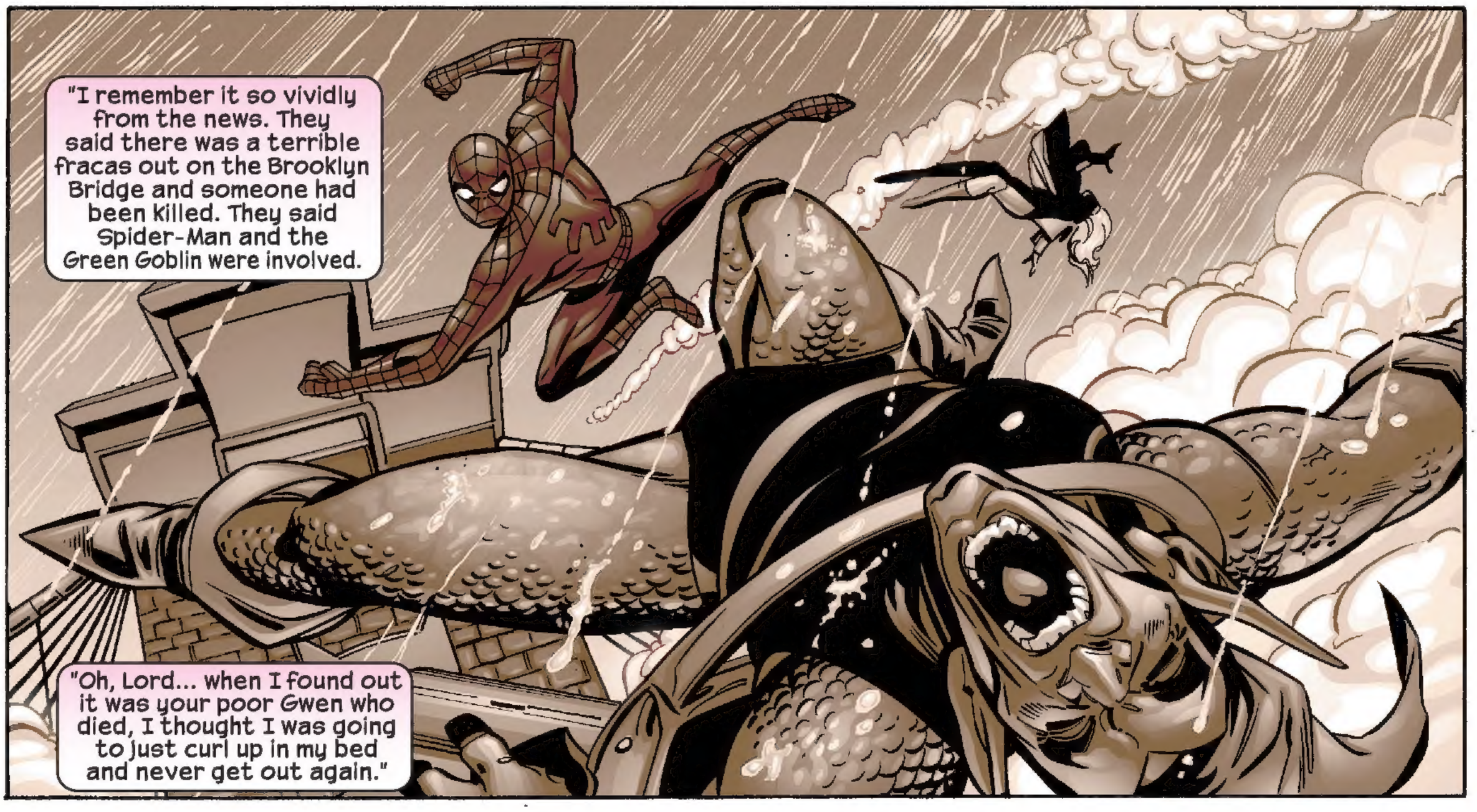
And I realize everything I *thought* I knew about you was *wrong*. It's going to take some getting used to.

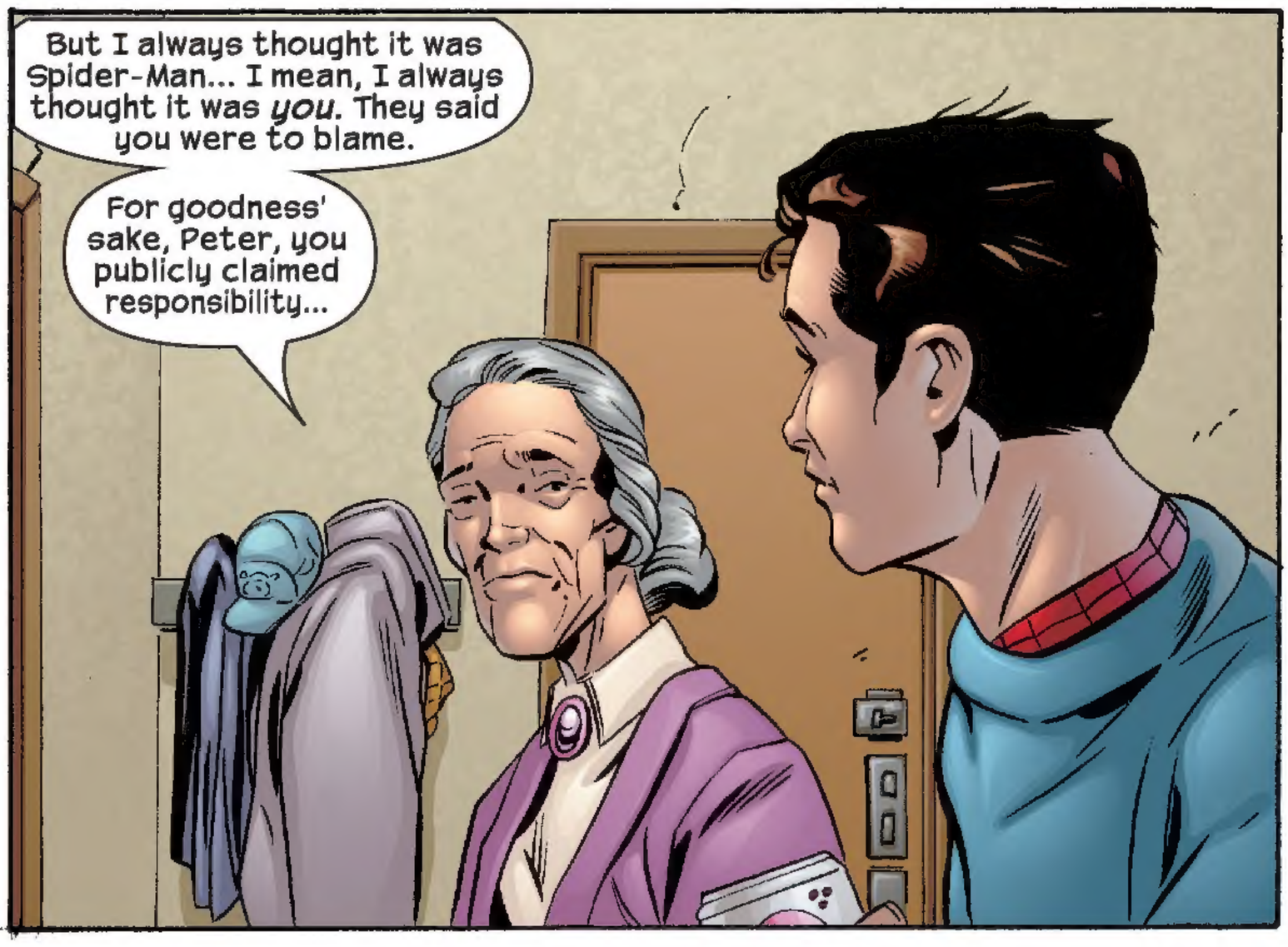
DELI

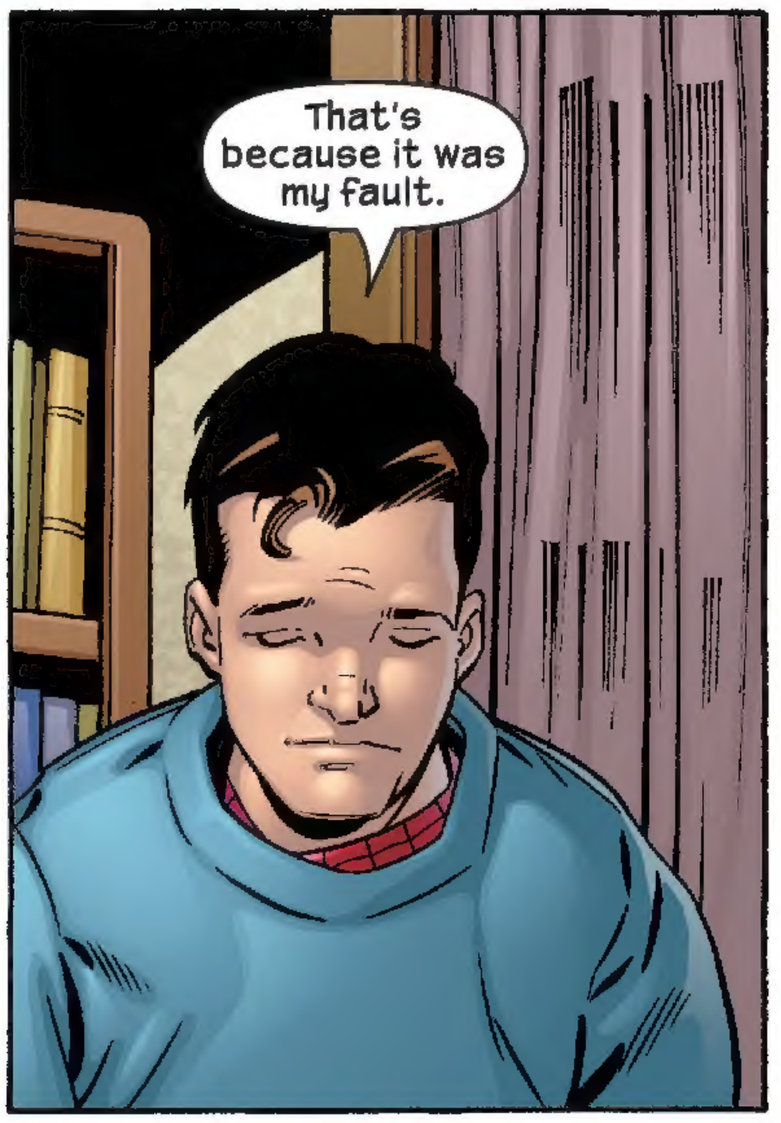
Oh, Peter... I just realized about *Gwen*.


POP

Now that I know who you are... what you've been hiding all these years... it still doesn't help to make any *sense* of it.
Am I supposed to simply abandon everything I knew? I'm too *old* for that.


"I remember it so vividly from the news. They said there was a terrible fracas out on the Brooklyn Bridge and someone had been killed. They said Spider-Man and the Green Goblin were involved.
"Oh, Lord... when I found out it was your poor Gwen who died, I thought I was going to just curl up in my bed and never get out again."


But I always thought it was Spider-Man... I mean, I always thought it was *you*. They said you were to blame.
For goodness' sake, Peter, you publicly claimed responsibility...


That's because it was my fault.

What happened, dear? I mean, *really*...

I was trying to save her from the Goblin. He'd found out she was my girlfriend and he took her up there to draw me out.

"When I got to her, she was still alive-- barely conscious, but otherwise okay. I was so relieved, I didn't notice him coming.

"By the time I did, it was too late. The whole thing was overkill... he hit her like a steam iron flattening a grape.

BUCKY + WAYNE AFTER KANE + ROMITA

"She went off the edge... I didn't have a moment to stop her from falling-- I was too far away.

"I just lunged forward with everything I had and tried to catch her.

"But, see, that webbing was never designed to stop anyone but me from falling. And the resultant jarring snapped her neck."

I've always known it, Aunt May... if she'd hit the water somehow she would've survived.

But I never gave her that chance. I killed her as sure as I'm standing here today.

And this burden you've carried all this time? You think what happened to Gwen was somehow your fault?

Oh, Peter... don't you know that some truths are self-evident?

You *know* what's in your heart, my love, and what's more you've *always* known. Those of us who love you know you wouldn't harm a fly if it could be avoided... you're too much like your Uncle Ben in that regard.

You adored that girl as much as anyone possibly could-- how can you even entertain the notion you killed her?

The problem is, you've held this inside for too long. No one has that much strength. Not even a young man with spider powers.

I want to *know,* Peter. I want you to tell me everything about Spider-Man: how you are, what you do, where you go. Everything.

Aunt May... I'm real tired right now...

Fine. I've waited this long for the truth. I can wait another few days. You just think of how to tell me, and I'll be waiting whenever you're ready.

But Peter... I want to know it *all* this time. Everything you've kept hidden...

...it's high time you faced who you *are.*

Monday, 8:33 AM. Just another day.

PS102

Another day I came to work without preparing any lesson plans, that is. I'm too distracted to make something up on the fly.

I can't get Aunt May out of my mind. The pressure and the anticipation are unbearable. I mean, what am I going to tell her-- the *truth*?

RADIATION

11 AM: She decides to send me flowers, just to make me feel even more guilty, thus sending the entire class into fits of laughter...

Dude, Parkie got flowers!

Must be from his girlfriend.

♡ MAY

FLORIST

5:59 PM: Dinner. A quick and hearty meal consisting of fried noodles, a bucket of wontons and at least four cans of energy drink.

7:48 PM: out on patrol. Got gas.

7:49 PM: everything goes nuts.

I recognize more of Hammerhead's men... they're the *obvious* ones in the monkey suits. The ones firing back are Colombians from the Heights. The guys in the middle are Japanese Yakuza.

It's, like, the United Nations convenes on the Jerry Springer show.

Banzai! Look out below!

Holy crap! Get outta here!

He ain't nuthin'-- I gottim!

Which is a pretty ironic thing to say because that's when the *Jamaicans* show up.

Tch... you guys are so impatient. Couldn't you at least have saved some bullets until the Irish got here...?

PUNCH!
Heads up, chuckleheads! Enraged spider comin' through!
BLAM!
THWIP
KRAK!

⊰urf!⊱
⊰ukk!⊱

What I don't get is how come you guys are suddenly all *goofy* on each other. Is this about the World Cup?
Nah... yougodda beuntah de re-yazunn, man! Dis ferall demarbuz on de-yole aree, fo' queen heself, yay?

Okay, I have no idea what he just said.

Well, somebody must have been exaggerating because as it turns out, New York isn't one big happy family after all. By the time the fighting's stopped, I have only the vaguest idea of what's going on.

It seems someone's muscled in on someone else's deal, leaving a third party very upset indeed.

The Jamaicans are naturally annoyed at the Italians, and the Japanese and Colombians are both upset with the Chinese.

Also, there might have been a *kangaroo* involved.

Whatever the case, this is one of that screwball *Hammerhead's* deals, which means things are going to get worse before they get better.

In the meantime, there's not a lot I can do but wait.

9:19 PM: swinging home. Still got gas. Hopped up on energy drink.

I need about three years of sleep. I have about three hours coming instead.

And somehow, I have to work out: how the heck do I tell her *everything?*

...so, how does it feel when you're swinging?

I dunno. Like a video game.

What about your eyes? Did you have laser surgery?

Uh-uh... it just happened. They're 20-10 at least.

How do you climb walls?

Like a spider.

That's enough out of *you*, Mister Smarty Pants. You're not too old to go over my knee, you know...

Gotta catch me first, you crazy old bat.

Oh, Peter, I'm so glad we're doing this. Now that I know what you've been hiding all these years, I can't help but wonder what else I might have missed.

Heroism runs in our family, you know. You remember Cousin Harold, don't you?

Cousin Harold... is he the one who looks like Mrs. Butterworth?

No, that's his brother, Roger. Harold's the one with the limp.

I don't know if I ever told you how he came about that limp: I'm sure you remember just after he divorced that awful Carol woman he went away for a number of years?

We told you he'd gone to study in Belgium...

No, you didn't. You said he joined the circus.

"Yes, well... the truth is Harold went missing because he was recruited in secret by the Special Forces. Most of his family and friends assumed he was travelling across Europe but in fact, he was sent to work undercover in North Korea.

"He was captured and put into a prison camp. They tortured him, but he never cracked. And do you know he actually escaped after biting his way out of a bamboo cage?"

And Cousin Harold told you this, huh?

He most certainly did. Your cousin was a true American hero.

He was a true *something*, at least.

Uncle Ben once told me that Harold got that limp when he was recruited by the Idaho State Penitentiary to serve three years hard time for impersonating a Baptist minister.

Oh, look at that poor kitty cat! Do you see it, Peter-- it must be terrified!

Uh-huh.

We can't just leave the poor creature up there. Let's *do* something...!

Aunt May, I can't.

Look... it doesn't *work* that way, okay? I can't just go leaping about in plain clothes 'cause everyone will *know*. And trust me, there's a good reason why everyone can't know.

Well, call me a stubborn old fool but I just can't see that poor little animal suffer so. We'll just have to take matters into our own hands, won't we?

Why me?

Ohh! Oh, dear! My leg!

Hey, check it out! That old lady took a nosedive!

Oh, thank you... you're so kind...

Okay, everyone... thanks very much. That's my aunt-- I got her.

Aren't you supposed to be saving a cat, young man?

Already *did*. Can we go now?

Oh, that was so exciting! We really must do it again...

Sure... you can come on patrol with me and be my teen sidekick. Listen, I gotta go, okay?

I need to go check something out. I'll call you later...

Well, now I know why you're always rushing off for no apparent reason.

Tuesday, 8:51 PM: the plot sickens.

With the involvement of the Polish Mafia, things are getting more complicated. Down below, the boys from the old country are busy preparing for a three thousand-gallon shipment of illicit potato vodka.

Only somehow, Hammerhead's gotten wind of the fact that this undercuts a number of his profitable sidelines and from what I hear, he's not a happy camper.

Word is, he's going to make his play tonight. All I can do is wait to see how the scene unfolds.

KA-THOOM!

Enter your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man, stage right.

Make 'em count, boys. Next time I see one-a them Polish bozos on our dirt, I wanna see some cops drawin' a chalk outline around the body!

Yo, Triangle-brain!

KRAK!

Uhh... okay, that went well, I thought...

...item two on the agenda...?

=Uhf...!=

After that, things go downhill. Next thing I know, I'm in the firing line as the English and the Germans square up for World War Three.

Bullets are flying, someone's just lobbed a particularly hard salami at my noggin and the big Korean dude I'm hitting has been trying to take my lungs out with a penknife.

Indeed, no nationality remains unaffected by the conflict and in a surprise move we are advanced upon by the French.

Hey, does anyone know the Polish word for "I am your friend -- stop hitting me with that baguette!"

You again? What, you think I'm gonna let you live after you do this to me twice, you little punk?

Ooh, mommy... the man with the funny head is trying to *scare* me. Make him stop before I wet myself.

I'll get you for this, Spider-Man! You hear me?

Come back an' face me like a man!

Sorry, pal-- I got more important fish to fry.

BUCKY + WAYNE AFTER DITKO

I see in the papers you were busy at the docks last night-- is that why you always carry all those bruises? Your friends think you're terribly clumsy, you know.

And we've all been wondering about the makeup.

Well, there's only so many times you can walk into a door, Aunt May. Waitaminnit... *makeup?* You didn't think...?

Well, Heavens knows what you young people get up to in the privacy of your own home these days.

Oh, that's spectacular! How on Earth did you get that one?

Simple: I set up a camera on a lamp post somewhere and time it to go off when I'm in the frame. That's how come I can get myself in so many pictures.

Well, aren't you a clever clogs!

PP

PHOTO BUM

Oh, look-- there's Cousin Harold!

What... after he got out of jail?

Uh... in *Korea.* I meant in Korea.

Oh, hey, check it out: There's one of you and Doctor Octopus.

PHOTO BUM

Ohh... that awful man. If only I hadn't been such a ninny. What must you have thought of me wanting to marry one of your arch-enemies?

That you'd lost your marbles.

Well... he was rather dapper and charming...

Yeah... in a psychotic mass murderer kind of way. Was it the X-Ray Specs or the bowl haircut you couldn't resist?

"Oh, Peter... will you ever forgive me for bringing that awful, awful man into our home? It must have been *excruciating* for you, knowing what you knew.

"Here I was betrothed to a criminal psychotic with all those ugly secrets and you knew it all along."

BUCKY + WAYNE AFTER ANDRU + GIACOIA

"Yeah, well... I can't exactly say it was a picnic, Aunt May. Remember I showed up at his place the night it all went pear-shaped..."

Oh, good Lord... I *shot* at you!

"I never realized until this moment what a terrible mistake I might have made. I thought you intended to kill the man I was going to marry.

"I had no knowledge of your true identity-- if I did, I would never have done what I did..."

--I... I'll have to shoot you!

BLAM

Mm. By the way, I hear the local S.W.A.T. team is looking for expert marksmen. Think you'd fit under the age limit?

Yes, well... don't expect me to miss so badly twice in the same lifetime, you cheeky little monkey--

OWF!

PHOTO ALBUM

Okay... I give... *ha, hehhh...*

Hehh... *hmff*... oh, this is so much fun.

But listen to me, sweetie... I know this is just a small piece of the entire puzzle. You're still hiding something from me. If I'm going to know who you *are*, you're going to have to tell me--

Aunt May... I can't...

I mean... I just *can't*, okay? You don't want to know it all. No one does.

Because the last time you told someone, she ran off to California? I'm not Mary Jane, Peter.

No, it's just... you don't know what you're asking me. Trust me, you can't possibly guess. You may think you want all of the truth, but it's going to be too much.

Look... I have school tomorrow. I'm out early on Friday for career day. All I'm asking is that you really think hard about it, okay?

I'll be at the statue by the duck pond at 4:30. If you still want to know, I'll tell you then. If you decide not to come, so be it.

This is *big*, Aunt May-- as big as anything you ever heard and *then* some. I'll be as honest as you need me to be, I promise...

"...but you've got to be one hundred percent sure you want to know."

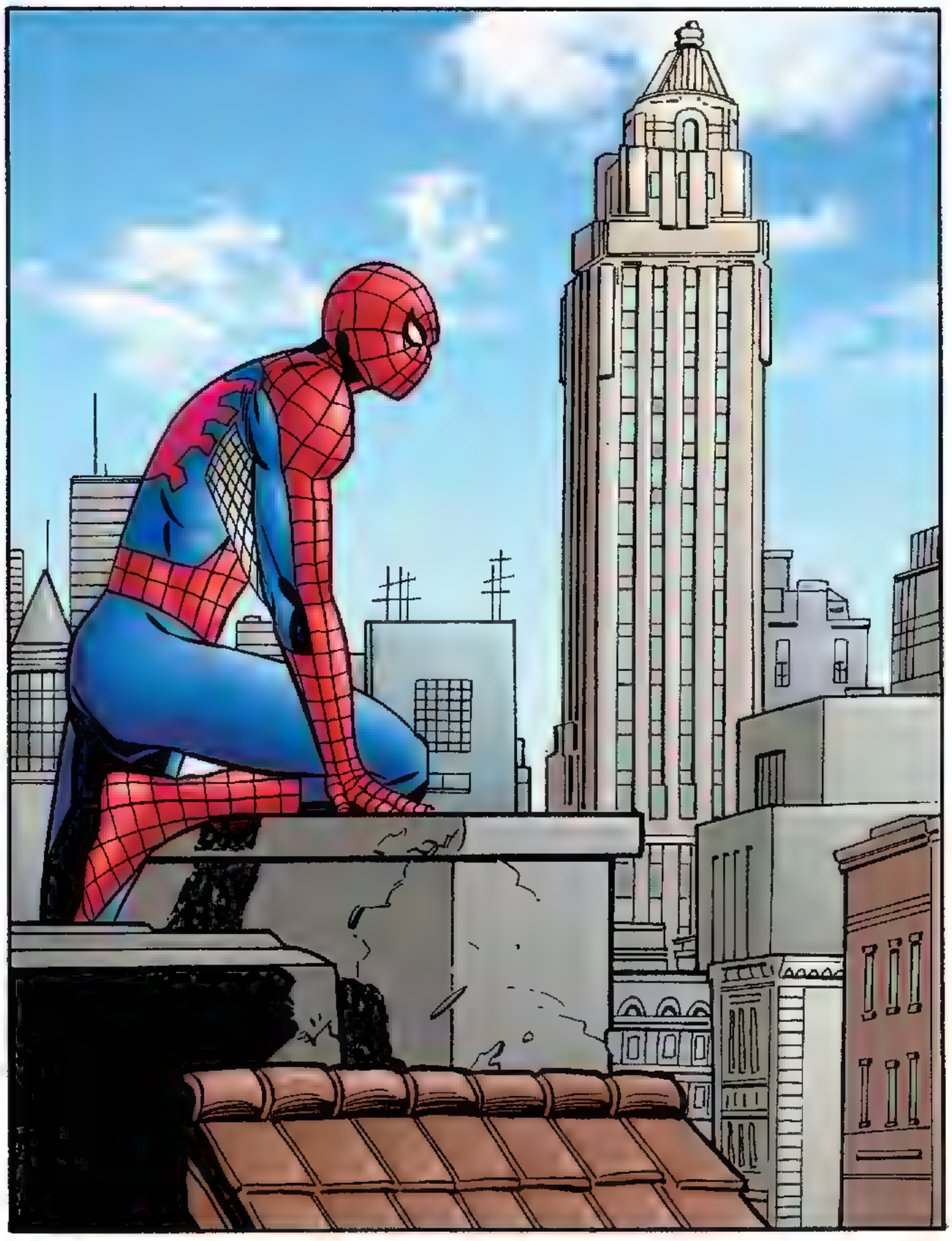
And this, of course, is my dilemma: how do I finally tell her the truth I've worked so hard to *protect* her from?

That old lady, she's been everything to me. In all those times I must've seemed like a lunatic... flitting about here and there, always going off at a moment's notice... she never doubted me.

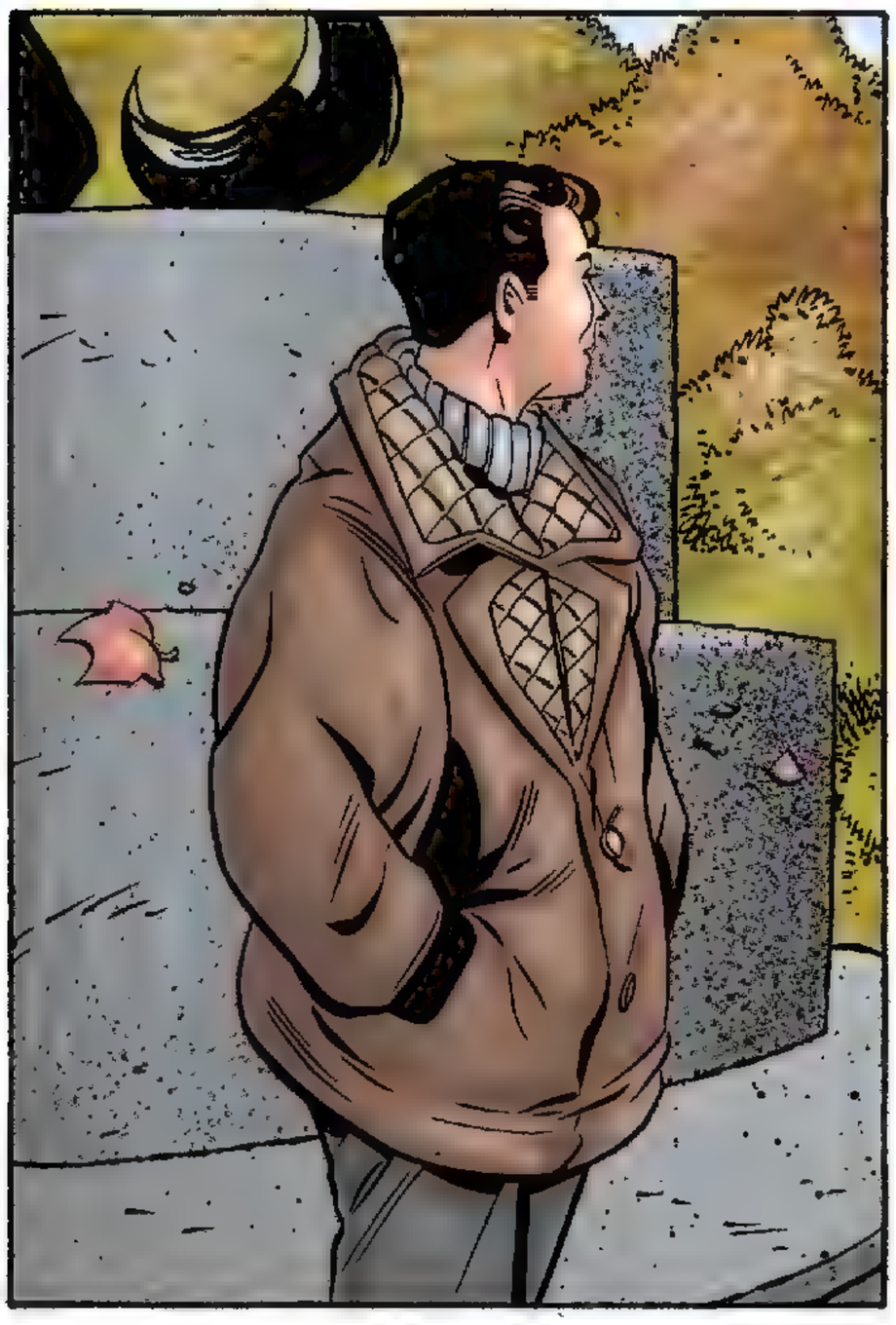
I'd protect her happiness with every ounce of my being. So how do I tell her about the creeps and super-freaks and liquid suits from another planet? How do I explain about mayhem and murder and all the other things she won't understand?

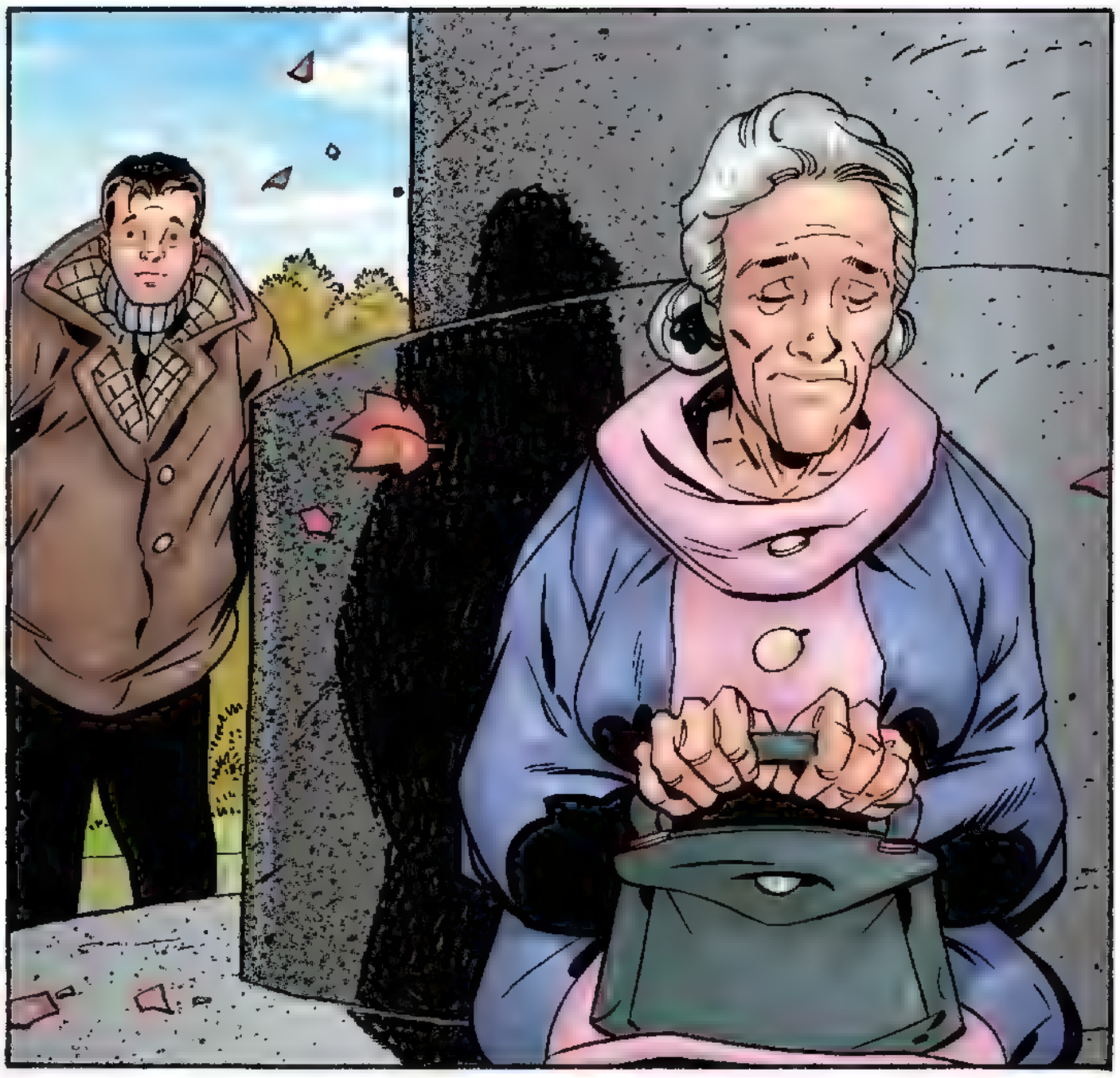
How do I tell her I only live in her world fifty percent of the time?

Okay, boys... give me the short version...
Uh... th' Stanton Warehouse tomorrow at six. Me an' the boys wuz goin' to tell you when you came by!



Friday,
4:30PM





The Green Goblin is Norman Osborn.

There's more: Osborn has some kind of potion that gives him his power, but it's sent him insane.

I'm pretty sure he gave it to Harry-- that's what killed him.

Even worse, he knows who I am. That means he knows about my family. He could get to me through you at any time.

I put you in danger every time I put on the mask.

I'm not going to hit Mister Osborn with my purse, if that's what you mean.

Are you okay?

I suppose this explains why I'm always being attacked or abducted by masked lunatics. I always assumed it was bad luck.

No... I mean are you okay with us?

I don't know.

At least, not yet. This is all too much at the moment, Peter. It's not every day you come across such a complicated situation.

I love you, dear-- I want you to be certain that will never change. But I'm an old lady, and old ladies need to think.

I don't want to know anything more... at least, not just yet. When I do want to know, I'll come to you.

I understand...

Oh, my darling boy... I don't think you ever did. Not really.

This is still about your Uncle Ben, isn't it? You're doing what you do because you feel responsible for his death.

You've always assumed being Spider-Man will somehow *fix* things.

But he's not coming back to life, Peter, no matter how hard you try.

After that, the rest of the night is a bit of an *anticlimax.*

It's your typical night of criminal chaos... same old interchangeable villains, same old wanton destruction of illegally-obtained property.

I have a couple of hairy moments, most notably in the form of my old pal, the Rhino...

...and some guy from Chicago who calls himself the Uber-Machine. Turns out they've been hired to act as Polish muscle in response to Hammerhead's power play.

UM

FUEL

The Uber-Machine is a real psycho, ready to kill anyone and everyone who stands in his way, which definitely includes me. On the outside, things look bad.

But on the inside, I'm laughing.

Heads up, Rhino! Watch the birdie!

BZZT!

Dude, are you okay? I think you might've bruised your brain cell.

CLAP CLAP CLAP

Hammerhead!

I gotta hand it t' you, Spider-Man: you're a real hero, you know that? All that work I put in to smooth out my operations an' you've taken out half the criminal population in the space of an evening.

I know you, pal-- you're nothing but a sore loser. You may think I'll fall for the even-tempered act but I just blew up your entire operation. This must be eating you up inside.

Uh-huh. You'd *think* that, wouldn't you?

You're probably real proud of yourself, huh, Spider-Boy? You've managed to put th' clamps on my little smuggling operation, you've whacked a few of my closest boys and taken down a coupla rival gangs in the process.

Th' truth is, I just handed over all the guys that wuz giving me problems in my organization-- you an' me just cleaned house and no one's any the wiser. It's cost me a few mil, naturally... but far less than if I'd done it myself.

See, it's all about appearances. You just did all of my dirty work, an' at one tenth of the price.

Just to show there's no hard feelings I'll do you a favor in return: I called the police five minutes ago. They're gonna be here any second. I suggest you make yourself scarce.

Aw, nuts.

...and at ten, we begin a new comedy series from Britain: "Oops, Sorry, Vicar!"

Coming up on PBS, for you night owls, a replay of today's important events at the Houses of Parliament. But first, a short film from Israel entitled "My Family, My Life..."

We interrupt this broadcast to bring a special newsflash from New York: A giant gelatinous blob has appeared in the skies off the Eastern seaboard and is making its way towards the city.

Proclaiming itself "Emperor of the Eastern Galactic sector," the creature appears headed for the SETI research center on East 57th and Maybury.

In a statement released during the last half-hour, Reed Richards of the Fantastic Four, dismisses claims that this is the work of the terrorist organization belonging to Victor von Doom...

NEWSFLASH

NYNEWS

This isn't my problem, no way. I mean, those guys have the situation well in hand and I've had a rough week. Even Aunt May would think it's not my problem, right?

Of course, no sooner has that thought entered my mind than I get to thinking about what she said.

Before you can say "giant gelatinous blob," that same old gaseous feeling has welled up inside. I'm looking sideways at an open window and the city in peril beyond.

And here, my troubles begin.

1:34 AM